

IN THE CLAIMS:

The following is a complete listing of the claims, and replaces all earlier version and listings.

1. (currently amended): A management system, connected to a communication line, for managing maintenance of a printing apparatus, comprising: An information processing apparatus connected through the internet to a first device having a display unit, the apparatus comprising:

transmission means for transmitting contract setting image information for concluding a contract for a second device at the purchase of said second device by the user;

reception means for receiving a reception unit that receives a first ID for specifying a first printing device having use history information showing that the first printing apparatus was managed transmitted through said internet and a second ID for specifying [[said]] second printing device as a new device to be managed, the first ID and the second ID being different from each other and being transmitted via the communication line;

search means for searching a search unit that searches for first contract information related to a contract corresponding to the first ID information received by said reception means reception unit; and

generation means for generating unit that generates second contract information related to a contract for [[said]] second printing device based on the first contract information searched by said search [[[means]]] unit.

2. (currently amended): ~~An information processing apparatus A managing system according to claim 1, wherein said generation [[means]] unit further generates display information for displaying said-generated the second contract information generated by said generation unit on said display unit, and said transmission means and further comprises a transmission unit that transmits [[said]] the generated display information via the communication line to an information equipment connected through said internet.~~

3. (canceled).

4. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus for generating contract information including charge amount information per print output of an image forming apparatus, the information processing apparatus comprising:

reception means for receiving use status information of a first image forming apparatus owned by the user, through a predetermined communication medium;

calculation means for calculation a number of points corresponding to said received use status information; and

calculation means for calculating a charge amount per print output, including a discount amount, of a second image forming apparatus constituting the object of a new contract, according to said number of points.

5. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 4, wherein said calculation means calculates said charge amount per print output including

said discount amount according to the machine type information of said second image forming apparatus and said number of points, and said contract information includes information indicating the maintenance for said image forming apparatus.

6. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus for respectively managing plural image forming apparatus correlated with identifiers, capable of communicating with said plural image forming apparatus through the internet, the information processing apparatus comprising:

calculation means for receiving the respective use status of said plural image forming apparatus, transmitted through said internet, and calculating a number of points according to said received use status;

wherein said calculation means calculates a discount amount of a contract for an image forming apparatus constituting the object of a new contract, according to the calculated number of points.

7. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising transmission means for transmitting, to said user, discount amount display information for displaying the discount amount calculated by said calculation means.

8. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said calculation means sums the numbers of points accumulated for said plural image forming apparatus according to the use status of each of said plural image forming

apparatus, and said calculation means calculates the discount amount for said image forming apparatus constituting the object of said new contract according to said summed number of points.

9. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 6, further comprising memory means for storing the number of points accumulated in the past for an image forming apparatus constituting the object of a prior contract of the user, wherein said calculation means calculates summed points by summing the numbers of points corresponding to the respective use status of said plural image forming apparatus and said accumulated number of points in the past.

10. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 9, further comprising discrimination means for discriminating whether date information included in said accumulated number of points in the past is within a predetermined period, wherein said calculation means accumulates said accumulated number of points in the past to said summed points in case said discrimination means identifies that the date information is within said predetermined period, but said calculation means does not accumulate said accumulated number of points in the past to said summed points in case said date information is not within said predetermined period.

11. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus for generating first contract information for a first printing apparatus connected to a management apparatus of the user, the information processing apparatus comprising:

recognition means for recognizing the presence or absence of contract information corresponding to an identifier of said user; and

selection means for selecting a first charge table in case said recognition means recognizes the presence of contract information corresponding to said identifier of the user or a second charge table in case said recognition means recognizes the absence of contract information corresponding to said identifier of the user.

12. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus capable of bidirectional communication with a printing apparatus of the user through a predetermined communication medium, the information processing apparatus comprising:

reception means for receiving information indicating the use status of a first printing apparatus through said predetermined communication medium; and

generation means for generating contract information of a second printing apparatus according to said received use status information of said first printing apparatus;

wherein said contract information includes information of a charge amount per print output of said printing apparatus, and said charge amount per print output includes a maintenance charge for said printing apparatus.

13. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 12, wherein said reception means receives ID information transmitted through said predetermined communication medium for specifying said printing apparatus of the user, and further comprising transmission means for transmitting, to a management apparatus

connected to said printing apparatus, information indicating a contract history list searched from said received ID information.

14. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said list information includes contract history information for the plural printing apparatus specified by said ID, and the contract information for said plural printing apparatus respectively include discount information according to said use status.

15. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising a flag generation means for generating information for displaying a flag allowing to identify, among said plural printing apparatus to which the discount amounts are respectively attached, a printing apparatus to which a higher discount amount is attached.

16. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 12, further comprising memory means;

wherein said memory means stores a table for calculating the discount amount per print output according to the use status of the printing apparatus, and said generation means calculates said charge amount per print output according to said use status and said table.

17. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 14, further comprising discrimination means for discriminating whether date information attached to said contract discount information is within a predetermined period;

wherein said generation means causes said discount information to be reflected on the contract information of said second printing apparatus in case said discrimination means identifies that said date information is within said predetermined period, but does not cause said discount information to be reflected on the contract information of said second printing apparatus in case said discrimination means identifies that said date information is not within said predetermined period.

18. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus connected to a second network capable of communication through a predetermined communication channel with a first network to which plural information equipment are connected, the information processing apparatus comprising:

reception means for receiving first information on the use status of said information equipment through said predetermined communication channel;

first output means for outputting information for instructing service providing to said information equipment based on said first information; and

second output means for outputting bill information for said service providing to the user of said first network.

19. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said plural information equipment are image forming apparatus of mutually different kinds.

20. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein said plural information equipment receive service providing based on contracts of mutually different contents.

21. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 20, wherein said contracts at least include a maintenance management contract in which a maintenance charge is paid according to the number of image formations.

22. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said contracts further include a contract in which the user pays, when the user desires to receive a corresponding service, a corresponding service charge.

23. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 18, wherein said first network includes confirmation means for confirming whether the payment for a bill based on said bill information is appropriate or note.

24. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said first network further includes transfer means for transferring the result of confirmation by said confirmation means to said information processing apparatus.



25. (withdrawn): An information processing apparatus according to claim 23, wherein said confirmation means issues a service ID for confirming whether said service providing has been actually executed.

26. (currently amended): An information processing method used in [[by]] an information processing apparatus connected through the internet to a first device having a display unit, the method comprising:

a transmission step of transmitting contract setting image information for concluding a contract for a second device at the purchase of said second device by the user;

a reception step of receiving a first ID for specifying a first device having use history information transmitted through said internet and a second ID for specifying said second device;

a search step of searching first contract information corresponding to the first ID information received by said reception means; and

a generation step of generating second contract information for said second device based on the first contract information searched by said search step.

27. (withdrawn): An information processing method by an information processing apparatus for generating contract information including charge amount information per print output of an image forming apparatus, the method comprising:

a reception step of receiving use status information of a first image forming apparatus owned by the user, through a predetermined communication medium;

a calculation step of calculation a number of points corresponding to said received use status information; and

a calculation step of calculating a charge amount per print output, including a discount amount, of a second image forming apparatus constituting the object of a new contract, according to said number of points.

28. (withdrawn): An information processing method by an information processing apparatus for respectively managing plural image forming apparatus correlated with identifiers, and capable of communicating with said plural image forming apparatus through the internet, the method comprising:

a calculation step of receiving the respective use status of said plural image forming apparatus, transmitted through said internet, and calculating a number of points according to said received use status;

wherein said calculation means calculates a discount amount of a contract for an image forming apparatus constituting the object of a new contract, according to the calculated number of points.

29. (withdrawn): An information processing method by an information processing apparatus for generating first contract information for a first printing apparatus connected to a management apparatus of the user, the method comprising:

a recognition step of recognizing the presence or absence of contract information corresponding to an identifier of said user; and

a selection step of selecting a first charge table in case said recognition step recognizes the presence of contract information corresponding to said identifier of the user or a second charge table in case said recognition step recognizes the absence of contract information corresponding to said identifier of the user.

30. (withdrawn): An information processing method by an information processing apparatus capable of bidirectional communication with a printing apparatus of the user through a predetermined communication medium, the method comprising:

a reception step of receiving information indicating the use status of a first printing apparatus through said predetermined communication medium; and

a generation step of generating contract information of a second printing apparatus according to said received use status information of said first printing apparatus;

wherein said contract information includes information of a charge amount per print output of said printing apparatus, and said charge amount per print output includes a maintenance charge for said printing apparatus.

31. (withdrawn): An information processing method by an information processing apparatus connected to a second network capable of communication through a predetermined communication channel with a first network to which plural information equipment are connected, the method comprising:

a reception step of receiving first information on the use status of said information equipment through said predetermined communication channel;

a first output step of outputting information for instructing service providing to said information equipment based on said first information; and

a second output step of outputting bill information for said service providing to the user of said first network.

32. (currently amended): A computer readable memory medium storing program codes to be executed by an information processing apparatus connected through the internet to a first device having a display unit, the program codes comprising:

a transmission step of transmitting contract setting image information for concluding a contract for a second device at the purchase of said second device by the user;

a reception step of receiving a first ID for specifying a first device having use history information transmitted through said internet and a second ID for specifying said second device;

a search step of searching first contract information corresponding to the first ID information received by said reception means; and

a generation step of generating second contract information for said second device based on the first contract information searched by said search step.

33. (withdrawn): A computer readable memory medium storing program codes to be executed by an information processing apparatus for generating contract information including charge amount information per print output of an image forming apparatus, the program codes comprising:

a reception step of receiving use status information of a first image forming apparatus owned by the user, through a predetermined communication medium;

a calculation step of calculation a number of points corresponding to said received use status information; and

a calculation step of calculating a charge amount per print output, including a discount amount, of a second image forming apparatus constituting the object of a new contract, according to said number of points.

34. (withdrawn): A computer readable memory medium storing program codes to be executed by an information processing apparatus for respectively managing plural image forming apparatus correlated with identifiers, and capable of communicating with said plural image forming apparatus through the internet, the program codes comprising:

a calculation step of receiving the respective use status of said plural image forming apparatus, transmitted through said internet, and calculating a number of points according to said received use status; and

a discount amount calculation step of calculating a discount amount of a contract for an image forming apparatus constituting the object of a new contract, according to the calculated number of points.

35. (withdrawn): A computer readable memory medium storing program codes to be executed by an information processing apparatus for generating first contract

information for a first printing apparatus connected to a management apparatus of the user, the program codes comprising:

a recognition step of recognizing the presence or absence of contract information corresponding to an identifier of said user; and

a selection step of selecting a first charge table in case said recognition step recognizes the presence of contract information corresponding to said identifier of the user or a second charge table in case said recognition step recognizes the absence of contract information corresponding to said identifier of the user.

36. (withdrawn): A computer readable memory medium storing program codes to be executed by an information processing apparatus capable of bidirectional communication with a printing apparatus of the user through a predetermined communication medium, the program codes comprising:

a reception step of receiving information indicting the use status of a first printing apparatus through said predetermined communication medium; and

a generation step of generating contract information of a second printing apparatus according to said received use status information of said first printing apparatus; wherein said contract information includes information of a charge amount per print output of said printing apparatus, and said charge amount per print output includes a maintenance charge for said printing apparatus.

37. (withdrawn): A computer readable memory medium storing program codes to be executed by an information processing apparatus connected to a second

network capable of communication through a predetermined communication channel with a first network to which plural information equipment are connected, the program codes comprising:

- a reception step of receiving first information on the use status of said information equipment through said predetermined communication channel;

- a first output step of outputting information for instructing service providing to said information equipment based on said first information; and

- a second output step of outputting bill information for said service providing to the user of said first network.

38. (currently amended): A program, stored in executable form, in a computer-readable storage medium, to be executed by an information processing apparatus connected through the internet to a first device having a display unit, the program comprising:

- a transmission step of transmitting contract setting image information for concluding a contract for a second device at the purchase of said second device by the user;

- a reception step of receiving a first ID for specifying a first device having use history information transmitted through said internet and a second ID for specifying said second device;

- a search step of searching first contract information corresponding to the first ID information received by said reception means; and

- a generation step of generating second contract information for said second device based on the first contract information searched by said search step.

39. (withdrawn): A program to be executed by an information processing apparatus for generating contract information including charge amount information per print output of an image forming apparatus, the program comprising:

a reception step of receiving use status information of a first image forming apparatus owned by the user, through a predetermined communication medium;

a calculation step of calculation a number of points corresponding to said received use status information; and

a calculation step of calculating a charge amount per print output, including a discount amount, of a second image forming apparatus constituting the object of a new contract, according to said number of points.

40. (withdrawn): A program to be executed by an information processing apparatus for respectively managing plural image forming apparatus correlated with identifiers, and capable of communicating with said plural image forming apparatus through the internet, the program comprising:

a calculation step of receiving the respective use status of said plural image forming apparatus, transmitted through said internet, and calculating a number of points according to said received use status; and

a discount amount calculation step of calculating a discount amount of a contract for an image forming apparatus constituting the object of a new contract, according to the calculated number of points.



41. (withdrawn): A program to be executed by an information processing apparatus for generating first contract information for a first printing apparatus connected to a management apparatus of the user, the program comprising:

a recognition step of recognizing the presence or absence of contract information corresponding to an identifier of said user; and

a selection step of selecting a first charge table in case said recognition step recognizes the presence of contract information corresponding to said identifier of the user or a second charge table in case said recognition step recognizes the absence of contract information corresponding to said identifier of the user.

42. (withdrawn): A program to be executed by an information processing apparatus capable of bidirectional communication with a printing apparatus of the user through a predetermined communication medium, the program comprising:

a reception step of receiving information indicating the use status of a first printing apparatus through said predetermined communication medium; and

a generation step of generating contract information of a second printing apparatus according to said received use status information of said first printing apparatus;

wherein said contract information includes information of a charge amount per print output of said printing apparatus, and said charge amount per print output includes a maintenance charge for said printing apparatus.

43. (withdrawn): A program to be executed by an information processing apparatus connected to a second network capable of communication through a

predetermined communication channel with a first network to which plural information equipment are connected, the program comprising:

a reception step of receiving first information on the use status of said information equipment through said predetermined communication channel;

a first output step of outputting information for instructing service providing to said information equipment based on said first information; and

a second output step of outputting bill information for said service providing to the user of said first network.

44. (new): A method according to claim 26, wherein said generating step comprises generating display information for displaying the generated second information, and wherein said method further comprises a transmission step of transmitting the generated display information via the communication line.